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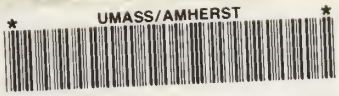


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# WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY:

# THE NEXT TEN YEARS

## CREATING AN AGENDA FOR MASSACHUSETTS

Prepared by Bay State Skills Corporation
Center for Women, Work, and Family

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# WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY: THE NEXT TEN YEARS

## CREATING AN AGENDA FOR MASSACHUSETTS

*A Future Search Conference*
*March 13-15, 1994*

■

*Conference Report, Economic Agenda, and Recommended Action Steps*

*Prepared by*
Bay State Skills Corporation
Center for Women, Work, and Family

## THE MIND MAP

*The creation of a mind map (reproduced as the backdrop for the cover of this report) is a central element of a future search conference and a graphic representation of the conference process to discover "common ground." After all the stakeholder groups had a chance to analyze the role of women in the Massachusetts economy from 1964 to the present, we began this collective exercise to establish the key factors that form the current reality around the theme "Women in the Present Economy." Working together, and from this theme, the participants "mapped" a paper-covered wall and, eventually, created this complex picture of the economic environment in which the stakeholders agreed that women exist today. The mind map comprised over a hundred elements, including a multi-trillion dollar national debt, women as single heads of households, the lack of affordable day care, the feminization of poverty, and corporate downsizing. It became an instant reference point for the data that resulted from the knowledge and experience of the conference participants. More importantly, the map represented our collective view; it became the foundation on which we built a common vision of what we could and should do to ensure a positive future for women in the economy of Massachusetts. (See page 6 for a further discussion of the mind map's significance to the conference.)*

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BSSC
Bay State Skills Corporation

May 1994

The changes in the labor market over the last thirty years have been profound. Not the least among these has been the growth of women's economic participation. Sometimes for reasons of choice, sometimes from economic necessity, more and more women have entered the world of jobs and work, with major impacts on the economy, individual workplaces, and almost every family.

The pace of economic change seems, if anything, to be accelerating. Technological advances, reorganization of working routines, and changes in corporate structure are the stuff of daily news — exhilarating for some, frightening for others. The implications for women are enormous.

The sixty-plus people who met in Massachusetts in March were determined to identify both challenges and opportunities for women to contribute to the economy of our state, while simultaneously considering how a healthy and thriving economy ought to contribute to the well-being of all people — whether as employees, citizens, or members of families. This conference was not one that involved "experts talking to each other," although, to be sure, a great deal of expertise was present. Instead, this was a "search conference" — a coming together of interested friends, colleagues, and others committed to developing a common agenda and call for action. We wanted not simply to understand what was happening in the economy and to and for women, but rather to decide what action we might take together, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, now or soon.

Working together, the group concluded that small, incremental improvements on the status quo were useful, but insufficient; we need, instead, to view women and the economy from a fundmentally different perspective. We need to think of women and families as resources, not as liabilities and limitations to economic health. We need to come to understand that people are the reason we quest for a healthy economy, not the barriers to that ambition. We need to remember that health and the pursuit of happiness are the end goals of a democratic society — the ambitions themselves, not merely the by-products of economic endeavor.

Ours was not a dreaming group, although dreams were freely expressed. Rather it was a highly practical, even politically sophisticated group that was prepared to make recommendations and back them up with concrete steps. Some of the steps recommended may be taken by the legislature, others by individual organizations represented at the conference; still others will require joint action. For our part, Bay State Skills Corporation is prepared to offer concrete initiatives in work preparation and adjustment for first-time job entrants, for women re-entering the labor force, and for those presently working who are affected by the changes in the economy. We have some ideas about how to develop such efforts through our Center for Women, Work, and Family, and we recieved many new ideas from this search conference.

The agenda is still forming, and readers of this report ought to consider this time as an opportunity to have input. We commend this report — and, more importantly, the agenda that it helps to launch — to your active consideration.

Erik Payne Butler
President

# Executive Summary

*Our society and the workplace are changing. The goal of the conference and of the conference report is to harness the power that is driving this transformation. Working together over the next ten years, we can use this power to ensure that women and the work that they do continues to enhance the workplace, the family, and the community. The result of our efforts will be a healthier economy for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*

*Women and the Economy: The Next Ten Years — Creating an Agenda for Massachusetts* is a first-ever effort to enhance economic development in the state by putting together a pro-active agenda for women to improve their standing in the economy. For too long, services to women needing assistance in the job market have been made available only *after* they are on welfare, *after* they have become unemployed, *after* they have been abused, or *after* they have become homeless. From March 13 to 15, 1994, Bay State Skills Corporation (BSSC) and its Center for Women, Work, and Family (CWWF) sponsored this conference to help develop an agenda that puts women and their families in charge of their destinies.

For some women, it is the lack of career information and guidance that keeps them from becoming viable participants in the economy. For others, it is the lack of support services, such as adequate and affordable dependent (child and elder) care and transportation. But for most, it is the workplace itself — with its inflexible work hours, poor benefits, low pay, and lack of adequate retirement provisions — that keeps women from making their optimum contributions to the economy.

Using the strategic planning model called a "future search conference," this economic development effort involved key stakeholders in the Massachusetts economy. They represented advocacy groups, business and industry, education, government agencies, the legislature, private/nonprofit groups, and working women — paid and unpaid. Their joint goals were to develop a common view of the future for the economy of Massachusetts and to create an agenda for women that helps build that economy.

## A Future Search Conference

A future search conference is task-focused; instead of bringing in "experts" to guide the discussions toward preconceived goals, the process relies on the knowledge, expertise, and experience of the participants, who work in and can change systems. The only predetermined conference goals were to create a consensus, affirming the Commonwealth's commitment to: (1) forge an economic agenda that includes the women of Massachusetts, (2) establish a coordinated set of action plans, and (3) set up a collaborative statewide network of services to ensure the integrity of those commitments.

During the conference, participants completed a series of structured activities that developed a foundation of common information about the past, present, and future for women in the economy of the Commonwealth. Our primary concerns were to find ways to take advantage of this information and of the power behind the changes that are ongoing in our society. If we can harness this momentum for change, we can improve the economic situation for women and their families. Thus, we focused on creating an agenda and determining the action steps necessary to realizing our planned improvements.

To guide our analysis of the past, present, and future of women in the economy, we asked the following:

### The Past

- What factors and forces have shaped the economy and what have been our individual and professional roles in that economy since 1965?
- What defined our economic and personal stakes in the Commonwealth?
- What experiences did we have in common?

### The Present

- What shapes the successes or challenges for women in the workforce today?
- What is our response to those influences?

### The Future

- How do our perceptions contribute to a common view of the future for women that encompasses the diversity of our experiences and interests?
- Can we articulate a future scenario in which we can all participate?

Our answers to these questions formed a database of experience and interests, creating a comprehensive list of the forces shaping the present and future climate. From this base, we moved to define a common vision for the future of women in the economy of Massachusetts.

## The Outcomes

The participants in *Women and the Economy: The Next Ten Years — Creating an Agenda for Massachusetts* created an outline of our common vision of the future, which includes our comprehensive agenda and our practical goals. We collectively claim ownership of this agenda, and we will strive to make it a reality.

This report, reviewed by a volunteer subcommittee of the conference participants, provides three kinds of information. First, the report gives those not in attendance a glimpse into the quality and depth of the thought and data generated during those three days. Second, it identifies the key priorities and concerns that are shaping our economy and affecting the issues of importance to women.

And finally, it describes our agenda and the action steps to implement this agenda in order to take control of the sweeping changes that are taking place in the Massachusetts economy and the effects that these changes have on women as participants and players in this economy. It is our hope and expectation that, with a growing understanding of the influence of women by the conference participants and others who become a part of this economic development effort, this document will serve as a guide to recognizing and enhancing the role of women in the economy and the contributions that they bring to an evolving workplace.

## An Economic Agenda for Women

To create a healthy economy that exists to support all of the people of the Commonwealth, we propose the following agenda. Together, we will:

1. Transform the political and policymaking processes to acknowledge and respond to the diversity of voices in the Commonwealth.
2. Transform and adapt the structure and environment of the workplace to respond to the changing characteristics of the Commonwealth's workforce.
3. Transform the access route to employment so that all in the Commonwealth who want paid employment can work with dignity at a living wage.
4. Transform the Commonwealth's education and training systems to create a bridge between the needs of the workforce and the needs of the workplace and to customize the response to the needs of women in the workplace.
5. Transform the economy of the Commonwealth from one that exists to support business to one that exists to support people and from one that ignores "women's" issues to one that works to solve them because they are "family" issues.

By working collaboratively, we will meet our goal: a healthy economy that supports and includes the well-being of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

# I: The Past

## Searching for Common Ground

As participants in this future search conference, we began by seeking a common ground or understanding on which to build an improved economic future for women. By sharing our personal histories, we developed a shared view of history, and we came to appreciate how the members of each diverse stakeholder group perceive their current role in society. From the woman working at home to the director of a large state agency, each of us brought our own perceptions of our experience in the economy and our own professional history. In both our professional and personal lives, this lineage informs our values, our view of what we should be doing now, and our likely plans for the future. And so, our work at the conference, *Women and the Economy: The Next Ten Years — Creating an Agenda for Massachusetts*, began with a review of the past three decades.

## Discovering Our Common Ground

To begin, we each listed — on sheets of paper that had been divided into decades (1965-1974, 1975-1984, and 1985-1994) and placed on the walls surrounding us — the events that we considered significant in each of four categories: "Yourself," "Women in the Massachusetts Economy," "Workforce Developments," and "Society." As the walls filled, we began to see the range of experiences that would form our foundation.

The following synthesizes our analysis of those contributions and takes the first step toward achieving the common ground from which we would produce an economic agenda for women in Massachusetts:

## Yourself

As we analyzed those characteristics that describe us individually, we answered four questions: What can we learn about the people in the room? What resources do we bring to our future search task? How are we similar? How are we different?

As a group, we range in age from twenty-six to about eighty. We are educated, from post-secondary schools to doctoral programs. We are single, married, divorced, and remarried with children sprinkled throughout the pattern; our divorces tend to correspond with another significant life event, a trigger point, such as the completion of a Ph.D., the death of a parent, a promotion. We are well traveled, and a number of us have worked or lived outside Massachusetts and the United States. Many of us have become entrepreneurs, and we share life's difficult milestones — the loss of a loved one, a relationship, a business. Because we have experienced many changes, we are risk takers. Our first-hand experience of the impact of these changes increases our commitment to taking leadership roles on social issues.

Our differences are revealed by our varied life experiences. To highlight the range of our diversity, one participant acknowledged that at age fifty-five she returned to a Wall Street law firm, while during the same decade someone else reported that she learned how to walk and talk. Yet, regardless of the disparities, we found that we share more common threads of experience than we do differences.

Among our common strengths, we found four reasons for our belief that we can accomplish the task that we have before us. First, because we are a highly motivated, action-oriented group, we do

not want to sit back and wait for things to happen. Second, because of the stake that we have individually and collectively in the success of the economy, we are committed not only to creating but also to following the agenda that we will create. Third, because we are achievement-oriented, we will work to implement our vision of the future as part of the changes in our society that will continue to occur. And finally, we have the opportunity provided by this conference.

## Women in the Massachusetts Economy

The first thing that came to everyone's mind from 1965-1974 was the empowering of women by the rebirth of the women's movement and the creation of support organizations such as the National Organization for Women (NOW). Although legislation, such as Affirmative Action and EEO, was not written primarily for women, these programs did have a profound effect on women in the workplace.

With regards to the economic issues of the decade, women's wages in Massachusetts were low in relation to men working in the same jobs, and women had to contend with a job market that was not open to them, at least from 1965 to the early 1970s. However, there was movement and progress. In 1965, women teachers were finally granted the same pay scale as men teachers. More women came into the workplace, probably because the birth control pill made it possible for them to better plan the timing of their families, and women began to be employed in non-traditional jobs.

From 1975-1984, the ideas initiated in the previous decade were developed as social programs for women with the support of the political activists of the time. Title IX was passed. The state's divorce rate increased, more single women were heads of household, and the quality of life for families in the Commonwealth began to decline.

In that same decade, Massachusetts experienced a shift in its economic base from manufacturing to high technology. GE, Wang, and Prime Computer grew tremendously at this point. It also became more socially acceptable for women to work outside their homes; however, the comparable worth issue, which is still with us, remained; women earned considerably less money for the same or similar jobs. They did, however, find more educational opportunities open to them. The community colleges were enrolling more women, the first MBA program for women was created in Boston, and more women were entering graduate and law schools.

From 1985-1994, women realized that they were bumping their heads against "the glass ceiling," and many became entrepreneurs as an alternative. Because the economy went from boom to bust between 1985 and now, the increase in social programs and services for women that occurred in the previous decade were cut back. The larger companies experienced widespread layoffs, and there was a shift in Massachusetts from an economy based on high technology to one based on biotechnology and services.

In addition, more women became lawyers, doctors, and middle managers. Women who were included in middle management put work-family issues, such as dependent (child and elder) care, higher on the economic development priority list. As a result, the Family and Medical Leave Act was enacted. The problem of comparable worth, however, is still with us, as are many family, workplace, welfare reform, and gender bias issues.

## Workforce Developments

Four main trends, affecting every aspect of the role of women in the economy, created enormous changes in workforce development and the workplace during the past thirty years. First, traditional manufacturing industries, which have historically been the foundation of our economy, increased automation, relocated to other parts of the country, or declined. At the same time, the high technology industry, which began to rise in the first decade, added workers and grew, creating an ever-rising disparity in income between people who came on board when the high technology industry was booming and those who were working in failing manufacturing companies.

Then, in the most recent decade, the Massachusetts economy witnessed a number of boom-and-bust cycles — in high technology, in real estate, in defense-related industries. These cycles contributed to an enormous growth in the contingent workforce, including people who are employed but don't know for how long, people who have part-time jobs but who want full-time positions, and temporary workers. In addition, a worker now has to be computer literate and have management and organizational skills to be competitive.

Second, important social changes also affected the workplace in Massachusetts. The energy crisis changed the way people viewed the society around them and the way they would need to work to find a place in that society. Double-digit inflation in the second decade saw a rise in the number of two-income families and generated a situation where people had to work harder than ever just to make ends meet rather than to continue to climb the socio-economic ladder. More recently, the rise in the number of teen parents and the number of single parent households in an era in which two incomes are needed is creating a critical economic situation for the state. In addition to economic trends, this decade also saw increased violence both in society and in the workplace. However, women became more willing to speak out against the violence and other forms of mistreatment that they had previously accepted or ignored. Most notably, sexual harassment in the workplace has become an issue that people are willing to address and attempt to deal with.

Government action, the third major trend, has also affected the shape and nature of the workforce. The Great Society and the War on Poverty, for example, were attempts to help people who were nonparticipants or who were not fully utilized in the economy. Civil rights legislation, affirmative action programs, which corresponded to the rise of women in the workplace, and finally government retraining programs were all steps to help facilitate the participation of many nontraditional members of the workforce, including women. From 1975 to 1984, the government increased its support for low-income women and women in the workplace with more retraining programs. Unfortunately, in the most recent decade, government services have dwindled and support has disappeared just at a time when some people need it more than ever.

And fourth, education has changed and the changes have had an impact on the workforce. In the decade from 1965 to 1974, women began going back to school and entering advanced degree programs more frequently than they had in the past, causing a rise, in record numbers, in women's participation in the workforce and in the economy.

The next decade saw women continuing to return to school, advancing, and breaking many barriers in what were formerly "men only" occupations. At the same time, there was an increase in the number of women who were working out of need because a second income was crucial to the economic well-being of their families, in the number of single parents who were trapped at the lower end of the economic strata, and in the importance of dependent care as an issue for working women.

Most recently, there has been an increase in the legal protections for women in the workforce. While enforcement of those laws is still a problem, at least the legislation being written will provide the foundation upon which to build protection for the future.

Despite the societal ills described in the previous sections, much positive change has taken place for women over the past three decades. In the first decade, advances in birth control and the media's paying attention to feminist issues were very important. The second decade saw Geraldine Ferraro become the first woman to run for Vice President of the United States and Sally Ride become the first woman in space; it also brought the recession, the failure of the ERA, and the more conservative policies and attitudes of the Reagan/Bush years. This past decade has seen the rise of violence, drugs, and AIDS; the end of the cold war; Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg sitting on the bench at the Supreme Court; more women in politics; and a big increase in poverty.

The civil rights and women's movements affected all three decades, but poor people and minorities have been, and frequently still are, left out of the process. While we have made a token attempt at consciousness raising about these issues, we have also seen the United States continue to pursue policies that support business as a dominant influence, resulting in an increase in the gap between the wealthy and the poor and a lack of feminist values in public policy.

Hope remains, however. Women are beginning to courageously challenge sexism and to view themselves not as the victims of progress, but as participants with economic and political power in the workplace and in the community.

# II: The Present

To analyze the present situation for women in the economy of Massachusetts, we worked in mixed groups of stakeholders. From diverse perspectives, we used our analysis of the past to help us understand the present and to get closer to the common ground on which we could all build a foundation for creating the future.

We began by discussing the symbols that each had selected to represent women in today's economy. After the individual presentations, each group chose one symbol to represent the collective thinking of that group and then presented that symbol to the rest of the conference participants.

## Women in the Present Economy

**A Watch, Water, and a Candle:** The watch represents time. Because women's days are full, they need to balance their lives so that they have time for themselves and time to come together to make change. The water, as a precious but invisible resource, represents women. They are essential (there are 50 million women in the workforce and many more supporting it in their homes and as volunteers), but they are often invisible. The candle represents the eternal courage and strength of women.

**Two Different-size Washers:** When a screw is tightened, the washer redistributes the load. Using this perspective, the two washers represent two phases in the economy: the larger washer is the healthy economy with lots of jobs, and the smaller is the shrinking economy with fewer jobs. In a healthy economy, the load is distributed broadly, and ways are found to fund such things as dependent care and training programs and to support women so that they can participate fully in the workforce. In a shrinking economy, the programs and the supports disappear because women become invisible participants in the workforce. No matter what the size of the washer is, the hole in the center of each is the same. The holes represent the neglect and loss of women as full participants in the economy.

**Magic Glitter Wand:** The glittery bits floating in the wand represent the women of Massachusetts in all their different shapes and colors. When the wand is held still, they are stagnant, unproductive. When the position of the wand is altered, they gather together to create a magical, beautiful activity of constant change and movement.

**A Black Man and a White Woman with an Elastic Around a Cup:** These two people stood together to present this symbol to represent the diversity of partnerships that is the hope for the future of Massachusetts. The elastic represents the way a single parent in the group who worked two jobs and cared for two kids and a home had to stretch herself to make her skills marketable, to work in an agency that helps create change so that her kids will have a better life than she did, and to find a balance for all of this to keep her life sane and peaceful. The cup is half full, and that, in a curious way, is positive as it symbolizes society's ongoing effort to address of some of the individual, societal, and economic issues that need resolving. But . . . half full isn't good enough; the cup has plenty of room left to be filled.

**Child's Hammer:** The hammer represents how women are still being punished economically for the choices that they make — from choosing to stay at home and raise their children to choosing to achieve in the workplace. The contribution made to the economy by women who stay at home is not included in the GNP or valued when these women try to enter or re-enter the workforce. The assumption is that the skills learned on the job at home are not transferable to any other part of the economy.

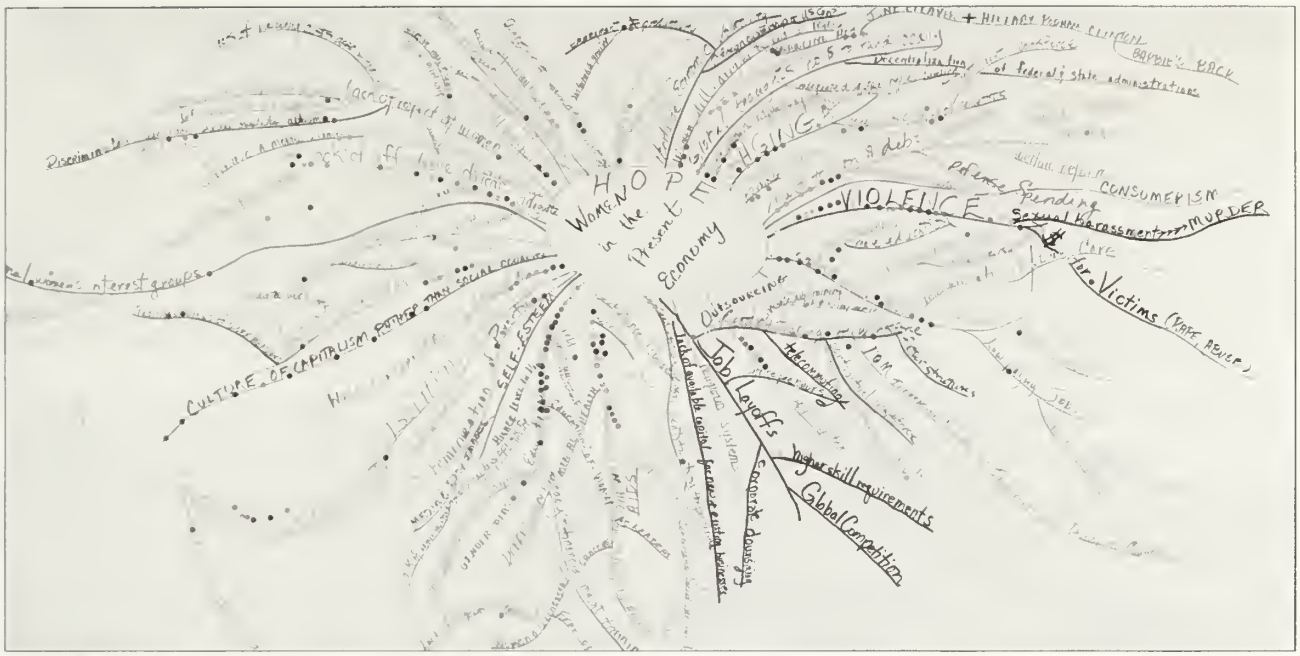
**Mickey Mouse Watch:** Mickey Mouse is fifty years old as is the woman who presented the watch. Mickey Mouse is still the kid that he was fifty years ago, and not much has changed for women in the Massachusetts economy in that time either. Women are still trapped in poverty in overwhelming numbers; they are also still trapped in low-paying jobs. The watch reminds us both that time is running out and that now is the time to change the process.

**Filofax Planner:** The Filofax Planner represents the concept that the only real control that women have in their lives is over their own time, and until they begin to control their time and personal schedules, they really don't stand a chance of moving beyond where they are. In this planner, there are appointments for little kids, elderly ailing parents, work, and political engagements. To participate effectively in the workforce, women have to prioritize the mishmash that constitutes their schedules, to decide what *they* want to do and not to do.

## Creating a Mind Map

Following the presentation of the symbols, the entire group gathered in front of a blank paper wall to create a "mind map" of the local, national, and international forces that shape the reality for women in the economy in Massachusetts. A mind map (ours is reproduced as the background for the cover of this report) is a visual representation of a collective view about the complex factors that influence a core issue, in this case, "Women in the Present Economy." Radiating outward from that core are the labyrinth of diverse, yet related, topics and issues — such as wage differentials by gender, health care reform, pop-ulation control, women as single heads of households, and defense conversion — that together have created the current situation. The radiating lines represent the individual and group responses of all the participants.

In less than an hour, our collective brainstorming had created a mind map that reflected the complex interrelatedness of the problems facing today's society; complex as the map was, however, we were all encouraged by the clear image of the problem that we now had in front of us. That clarity gave us hope that by working together we could determine the necessary agenda to address current problems and begin taking steps to complete that agenda. We, therefore, sought to determine the priorities on which we should focus our efforts.




**The Mind Map**

## Determining the Mind Map Priorities

To identify those priorities, each of us — using colored dots identifying the stakeholder groups from which we came — marked our top seven priorities. By counting the different colored dots, we determined not only the priorities of the group as a whole but also those that each stakeholder group felt were key to addressing the problems at hand. Together, our priorities were to:

- Restructure the workforce to address the current lack of flexibility.
- Address the needs of single-parent families.
- Confront the causes of violence as they relate to the attitudes toward women and their place in society.
- Improve the quality and availability of education and training programs.
- Provide comprehensive and affordable health care.
- Increase the affordability and availability of high-quality dependent care.

Each stakeholder group narrowed this list further in order to identify its own top three priorities, allowing the participants to explain their perceptions and to offer ideas on how to resolve the situation. This effort helped us take another step toward putting together our "common ground" foundation from which we would create our agenda for the future.

## Advocates

### 1. Restructure the workforce

As a result of corporate downsizing, many people are working extended hours. We also face limited on-site dependent care, limited job availability, and a welfare system that does not offer much help in assessing a person's skills and needs or in finding a job after training.

The impetus for change needs to come from corporate, governmental, and legislative channels. Without involvement and investment from these three groups, not much will happen to create a more flexible workplace that includes on-site dependent care, training programs, better needs and skills assessment, portable pensions, and the hiring of older workers.

### 2. Address the needs of single-parent families

For women who are single heads of households, the current system of benefits — social security, dependent care, Medicaid, maternity leave, personal leave, pay structures, retirement packages, and housing — is archaic and inadequate.

Social security should not penalize part-time workers and homemakers in their later years. We also need to rid the system of disincentives to work , provide on-site dependent care, and continue our efforts to en-sure that absentee fathers assume more of the finan-cial responsibility for the families that they have left behind.

### 3. Provide comprehensive and affordable health care

The current system fails to put equal emphasis on research for the treatment and cure of the diseases of women, adequate health care for the homeless, and mental illness, which still generates a social stigma. There are also huge waiting lists for half-way houses and detox centers. Insurance companies have too much power, and our system for training medical workers is abusive.

We want to see universal health care, adequate and affordable long-term care, prescription drug coverage, the protection of Medicare as a system, regulation of the pharmaceutical industry, and more focus on alternative treatments and preventive medicine. HIV, women-specific diseases, substance abuse prevention, and mental illness also need increased and focused attention, and we need to dramatically restructure the current insurance company system.

## Business and Industry Representatives

### 1. Restructure the workforce

As we attempt to maintain our place in a global economy, we are re-engineering the workplace on three levels: process (streamlining), people (layoffs, increased work loads, and part-time contingent workers), and tools (technology and automation, broader ladder organizations, and increased awareness of diversity issues).

Paradoxically, we look for an increase in corporate social responsibility through managed growth, the flexibility that will produce quality employees, employee involvement, and the number and quality of business/education partnerships. We would also like to see an increase in job sharing and telecom-muting and a greater use of employee output and reward systems.

### 2. Improve education and training programs

In many companies, the in-house and computer-based training offered to employees are inadequate because there is no time scheduled for people to take part in them. In addition, there is little capital available for training and for the business/education partnerships that could develop that training.

Basic skills literacy and ESL training must continue; the needs are great. In addition, our training programs should be customized for the jobs of the future and should include apprenticeship programs and life management skills training; government funding should be made available to support these programs.

### 3. Provide comprehensive and affordable health care

Currently, most health insurance offers continually less coverage at a higher cost with no portability of coverage and no benefits for part-time employees or sub-contractors. We also have limited dependent care, our pensions are at risk, and Social

Security may not exist for us or our children. Employers and employees alike would like to see lower costs for health care and portability of coverage so that workers do not get trapped in jobs that they hate because they cannot afford to lose their health benefits.

## Educators

We chose to name only one priority — "A Societal Shift from Selfishness Toward Commitment to Community" — because we believe it is the necessary underlying element to each of the seven issues selected by the larger group. Work is currently organized in an autocratic way. Adequate health and dependent care are natural consequences of the move toward a non-violent work system.

As educators, we have to not only explain how things should be organized differently but also live those differences. We need to change the style in which higher education operates; rid our public schools of gender bias and sexual harassment; humanize our personnel policies; teach, live, and practice ethics; and overcome the hierarchical approach by involving the people working in the system in the decision making and management of our educational institutions.

## Government Agency Representatives

1. **Restructure the workforce**

Workers are currently dealing with high-performance workplaces; the need for higher skill levels; the flattening of organizations (which leads to layoffs and pressure on wages); and the emergence of the contingent worker. We must also deal with the fact that most federal and state workforce reskilling initiatives are fragmented.

We look toward better regional collaboration between education and employment training agencies; the restructuring and globalization of our workforce, particularly through the U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Security Act; the strengthening of the technical education system, especially with regard to occupations for women in non-traditional, higher paying areas; and tax incentives to encourage corporate expenditures for training.

2. **Improve education and training programs**

Most women are not educated about economic realities — the macroeconomic changes in this country and the world — and how they relate to their own lives.

We need to reform education from the federal and state levels. We must also continue our school-to-work efforts, support Head Start, emphasize math and science education for girls and young women, create a stronger relationship between schools and the workplace, and move toward a new era in which state and federal agencies will cross barriers, downgrade "turf" issues, and respond in a more allied, collaborative way to people's needs.

3. **Increase the affordability and availability of high-quality dependent care**

The current system is more fragmented than ever. Women in poverty are the only group that receives support; the working poor, constituting almost 20% of the workforce, has been left out. In general, we give a great deal of lip service to the needs of children and dependents, but we pay little to meet those needs; the majority of that responsibility is left to women without compensating them financially.

After-school and during-work dependent care programs are essential, as are sliding fee scales and financial subsidies to enable workers to care for their dependents. We need to better coordinate the policies of our state agencies, provide tax incentives for businesses that provide dependent care, and encourage the MassJobs Council to take these issues on as priorities. To eliminate the fragmentation of services, a task force should be formed to integrate and address the multiple problems faced by women: violence, dependent care, low wages, and skill deficiencies.

## Legislators

1. **Improve education and training programs**

Education reform legislation is in place to help implement school-to-work transition programs,

improve literacy, bring up academic standards and achievements, and increase financial equity across and among school systems. We need to provide better access to good training programs for working poor women, and we must address defense conversion from the point of view of the worker and the worker's need for retraining.

We would like to focus on early childhood education because all the data shows that children who are in good programs as three- to four-years old go on to do well. We would like to explore longer school days and years and how both would help dependent care issues. We want to work on student retention, not only in K-12 but in higher education as well. To meet training needs, we would like to see a closer match between what students have learned to do and what employers need, and we see a need to introduce life management, practical skills, gender bias, and self-esteem training into school curricula to prepare students to make transitions within the economy.

2. **Restructure the workforce**

We are pleased that family and medical leave, although limited, is now available. We have also instituted statewide manufacturing networks, which are a positive step in our overall business strategy.

We look forward to job sharing, the expansion of telecommuting, and the use of telecommunications as a workforce tool (the state and the State House are woefully behind the times). We want men to become interested and to take an active role in the family issues that often only women face. We support a four-day week; flex time; women working in more non-traditional, higher paying jobs; and tax incentives for businesses to offer more flexibility in their workplaces and a menu of benefits to their workers.

3. **Increase the affordability and availability of high-quality dependent care**

Our current limited dependent care system is designed predominantly for welfare recipients, and it should be made available to our working poor.

By re-examining our licensure policies, we can increase the quality of care and make it more feasible and profitable for qualified people to enter careers as care providers. Funding needs to be increased to explore and support intergenerational care, parent evaluation, and on-site dependent care on college campuses for people who are returning to school. In addition, part-time workers and employers of those workers should not be required to contribute toward social security tax to the same extent as full-time, fully benefitted workers. We would also like to explore a state-sponsored dependent care initiative as well as funding for a team made up of providers and an ombudsperson to identify some of the problems related to this issue.

## Private/Nonprofit Organization Representatives

1. **Address the needs of single-parent families**

We could help create a family assistance system that would care for sick children so that single parents would not have to miss work.

2. **Improve education and training programs**

No standard competencies for instruction or curriculum exist, and financing is uncertain. There appears to be no public commitment to improving either one.

We would hope to require accountability; to restructure funding priorities; to increase community commitment; to distribute funds equitably across the state; to expand skills training for women and include training for non-traditional jobs; to retrain educators to address discrimination; and to politically empower educators and those who support education.

3. **Restructure the workforce**

At present, our workforce is reeling because of wholesale layoffs and downsizing. Hardest hit are women, who are traditionally and increasingly employed as contingent, temporary, and part-time workers without benefits.

We are beginning to look to telecommunication and telecommuting as a positive option for women as well as the disabled because people could work at home, time would be flexible, job sharing would be possible, and on-site dependent care would be

determined by each individual. In addition, we would advocate for benefits for part-time and temporary workers.

## Working Women

### 1. Restructure the workforce

We are penalized by the current system for being responsible for our families, and we tend to play into the system instead of trying to change it. We take time off without pay or call in sick or lie about coming in late in order to cover for situations regarding our children and still accomplish what we need to in the workplace. In other words, we respond individually rather than collectively.

We need to educate the marketplace and ask that family issues be part of a restructuring that includes flex time, paid family and personal leaves, and the empowerment of working women, and we need to increase the networking and support systems among women.

### 2. Increase the affordability and availability of high-quality dependent care

We settle, at present, for substandard dependent care for which we pay too much, and our society undervalues the professionalism of the dependent care worker both in decision- and policymaking status and in compensation. Little monitoring is available for any kind of dependent care.

We support an increase in the availability of dependent care, in the benefits and wages for dependent care workers, and in corporate dependent care. We would also like to educate the corporate community as to the employee issues related to having dependents in care.

### 3. Improve education and training programs

We are allowing disinvestment in education statewide because our daily schedules limit our participation in education and curriculum development and in the management of our local schools. The result is that the schools are not educating our young women to be risk takers or leaders, to value their own contributions, or to develop self esteem.

To recoup, we support women becoming more involved in designing curricula, particularly around leadership skills training, and injecting into the system such approaches as career role models and mentorships for our young women. We need to involve industry in educational development at all levels so that our girls, especially, are trained to be competitive in a future economy. We also need to affiliate with the state in national advocacy and lobbying networks to affect national educational policy.

## Prouds and Sorries

Finally, each stakeholder group looked at the present from a second, more internal perspective. Each group was asked to generate a list of "prouds" and "sorries" — a list of the things going on right now within our organizations about which we feel good and about which we feel apologetic. By going through this important exercise, we developed a shared appreciation of present strengths, needs, and hopes, and a mutual "owning up" to mistakes. Moreover, the effort helped us move closer to publicly stating a commitment to doing something about correcting those mistakes.

| | Advocates | Business and Industry Representatives | Educators |
|---|---|---|---|
| "We are proud that..." | • domestic violence has moved up on the priority list.<br>• health care is available to the homeless.<br>• health care reform is imminent.<br>• some corporations are becoming more socially responsible.<br>• individual innovative efforts, such as mentoring programs, are in operation. | • corporate foundations support education.<br>• work/family programs are in place.<br>• we are providing meaningful work.<br>• we offer good compensation and benefits relative to other sectors.<br>• we support wellness/substance abuse programs.<br>• we have limited smoking in the workplace.<br>• we are involved in community affairs. | • there are pockets of innovation in the educational system.<br>• there are experiments in increasing the involvement of women in management.<br>• K-12 educators are involved in meeting children's social needs.<br>• we participated in the development of the educational reform act.<br>• more women are involved in higher education.<br>• many schools have increased the awareness of women's issues and women's studies programs. |
| "We are sorry that..." | • health care may not be universal.<br>• attacks and cuts on entitlement programs continue.<br>• the public education system is in the condition that it is.<br>• re-engineering programs are cutting jobs.<br>• our welfare system is so punitive.<br>• the United States is run by corporations, not people. | • we are not making full use of work/family programs.<br>• we are not doing enough with regards to benefits, wellness/substance abuse programs.<br>• we are not doing enough in terms of the recruitment, development, and retention of women and minorities in the workforce.<br>• we still have issues of sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, age discrimination, and violence in the workplace to address. | • we do not have a sufficient level of funding commitments.<br>• we have not eliminated gender bias in the classroom.<br>• we do not provide enough internship opportunities for students.<br>• we have not done a good enough job of reaching out to other stakeholder groups.<br>• there has been a prohibitive rise in tuition and other educational costs.<br>• a disproportionately low level of women are granted tenure.<br>• elitism in education continues.<br>• few educational programs are provided for pregnant teenagers.<br>• we lack effective birth control information and education programs. |

| Government Agency Representatives | Legislators | Private/Nonprofit Organization Representatives | Working Women | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • the education reform bill passed.<br>• we have a school-to-work task force in the state.<br>• we have provided effective training programs and the money to run them.<br>• we are enforcing the child support laws.<br>• the MassJobs Council has been strengthened.<br>• we have improved the coordination of our state activities.<br>• the Regional Employment Boards (REBs) have been empowered to take action in the employment and training field.<br>• job restructuring pilot projects are being implemented.<br>• the economic climate for women-owned businesses has improved. | • awareness of and funding for prevention of and treatment for victims of domestic violence have increased.<br>• educational reform is a reality and money has been authorized to support it.<br>• there is an initiative to support women-owned businesses.<br>• awareness of and funding for breast cancer has increased.<br>• we are taking steps to support defense conversion.<br>• we are now enforcing child support laws. | • corporations now include women in their management training programs.<br>• we have on-site day care.<br>• we provide family leave benefits.<br>• we provide life and business management skills training.<br>• we provide mediation skills training.<br>• we offer domestic violence counseling.<br>• we have created working partnerships between the public and private sectors. | • we did not play within the system.<br>• one of the benefits of staying at home to raise children is job satisfaction.<br>• we have made it as far as we have.<br>• we have been creative in overcoming the barriers that we have faced.<br>• women support women.<br>• women have participated effectively in making changes in the state's employment and training and workforce development efforts.<br>• successful, powerful women are role models.<br>• we have supported the passage of women-oriented laws.<br>• the number of women legislators and business owners has increased. | **"We are proud that..."** |
| • some children are still neglected by society and their families.<br>• the rigidity of funding requirements impedes coordination.<br>• there is duplication and fragmentation in governmental efforts.<br>• there is no empowered committee on women.<br>• we do not provide adequate substance abuse treatment.<br>• women are treated as a minority.<br>• education is neglected.<br>• women on welfare shoulder too much of the economic burden of our society.<br>• economic revitalization is not linked to job creation. | • family issues have been marginalized.<br>• our state training effort is at best a patchwork of activities.<br>• the sexual harassment bill failed to pass.<br>• funds to the Office for Children have been cut.<br>• we have not yet solved the welfare reform problem.<br>• we do not have a flexible, easily accessed social service delivery system. | • we have not provided more of a variety of training programs and more career counseling.<br>• there is little funding available to support the entrepreneurial ideas of women.<br>• there are no longer monies or services designated specifically to support displaced homemakers.<br>• funds are not available to provide "standalone" job search assistance. | • we have played within the system to the extent that we have.<br>• we have settled for substandard dependent care.<br>• we have not invested enough in the school curriculum.<br>• women sometimes do not support women.<br>• women do not have sufficient paid leave benefits.<br>• we do not have enough women role models.<br>• we have to waste time overcoming obstacles in order to play our part in the economy.<br>• the individual and collective voice of women is not loud enough. | **"We are sorry that..."** |

# III: The Future

As we began to understand the commonality of our interests in women in the economy and the strength in sharing our various perspectives, two questions emerged. What do we want to see for women in the economy in 2004? And, what are we prepared to do to achieve our future vision for working women in the Massachusetts economy?

To help answer these questions, each mixed group designed a seven-minute report, dramatization, or other creative means of communicating our vision of the future. The goal was to imagine an ideal future for women in the Massachusetts economy. The process and results were highly entertaining, and everyone had a great time developing their presentations. Each of the six groups (two groups combined their efforts to produce one scenario) provided us with a dramatization of its ideal future.

These skits focused on the emerging strengths, needs, and commitments of women in business, government, and family life.

## Future Scenario – 1

A talk show brings together four CEOs from major institutions to explain the support and advantages that they receive by being based in Massachusetts. The CEO of All That Glitters began by explaining that she got her start through a revolving loan plan; she also explained about all the state tax incentives that made Massachusetts a desirable place for manufacturers to locate. These incentives — coupled with state programs in literacy, ESL, GED, on-site day care, profit sharing, and a work-team philosophy with workers making critical decisions — made for a happy workforce.

The head of Home Sweet High Rise Property Management explained that her company empowers residents to run their own housing developments, parent councils, and youth councils. Property management training is available for all minorities and women, and funding for training is provided by Donald Trump. The company's philosophy supports team management, and the majority of employees are women.

New College has done away with the separation of work and study; every student is now also a worker. Productive Enterprises, a for-profit company, is now run by the college of agriculture and industry. The college is operated by an elected council of students and faculty, with no exams and no grades. Students grade and test themselves in consultation with each other and with instructors, and pay no tuition because the income from the enterprises run by the college pays for its costs.

Educational Testing Services was a company in crisis, with a decline in test scores and crisis in education, before it relocated to downtown Boston. Here they introduced school-business partnerships and youth apprenticeship programs and looked at school systems as suppliers of future employees, treating the school system as a valued partner. The result was a marked improvement in the quality of employee preparedness, while overall test scores improved.

## Future Scenario – 2

An extended family group is having dinner. Outside it is safe, the air is clean, and children are playing in the yard because Nintendo has gone out of business. Now that he works by telecommuting, dad has time to cook and to take care of the family. Tonight, the family is having neighbors and a foreign visitor to dinner. The guest is considering staying in Massachusetts because of the opportunities, including plentiful and affordable housing.

The group discusses other benefits to living in Massachusetts: plentiful jobs, including those for the elderly, and part-time jobs that pay for tuition, even if the classes taken are not for professional development. People are constantly changing careers and jobs; the workforce is skilled and happy. People working at home are quite diligent, enjoy telecommuting and flex time, and consequently take better care of their families.

Every high school has an apprenticeship and a school-to-work program. It is easy to get more education later, while working part-time in technical fields, and to access ESL programs. Sports are de-emphasized. No private prestigious eastern colleges exist; the University of Massachusetts is now the best. Science programs are over-enrolled with enthusiastic girls. A recent field trip to Washington D.C. for schoolchildren was made affordable because most of trip was paid for by the legislature.

## Future Scenario – 3

The Governor and her Cabinet talk about the time ten years ago when they attended a future search conference and decided to become women who played a part in the economy of tomorrow. They had grown tired of talking and decided to act to make things happen. They begin by changing the secretariats as follows:

The Secretary of Children focuses on financial incentives for dependent care, such as the redistribution of revenue from the new lottery, a state appropriation, city-built dependent care facilities, and a state tax allowance for each taxpayer.

The Secretary of Workplace Evolution is concerned with enacting work and family laws, anticipating global changes rather than reacting to them, and reinstituting a stable workplace. The contingent workforce is now gone, but its positive aspects remain as the state recognizes the value of flexibility; the need to care for families, children, and the community; the needs of a culturally diverse workforce; and the importance of matching skills to interests and providing ongoing training and retraining. In addition, all programs work to match skills to interests and provide ongoing training.

The Secretary of Arts and Creative Thinking, formerly responsible for JTPA, has instituted extra points for one good idea a week, has taken steps to do away with turfism, and ensures that arts are as now as important as sports.

The Secretary of Life-long Learning (and Continued Productivity for the Elderly) has helped create a situation where women and men do not have to drop out of life after reaching a certain age; they are now seen as bringing wisdom and experience to the workplace.

The Secretary of Non-violence provides a safe environment for all: schools, parents, and children.

The Secretary of Health and Happiness has created more mental health facilities and more community centers and has moved toward greater spirituality, with less selfishness and greed. More fun is stressed in the workplace with less stress, more vacations, flowers at every workstation, and health and happiness breaks every day. The new leadership recognizes that men need to make new commitments to their children; that family issues are no longer seen as "women's issues"; and that there should now be equal sharing of family responsibility.

## Future Scenario – 4

Another new Governor and her Cabinet take office after their predecessors. There are no more punitive welfare programs, the Cabinet is all women because token men didn't work out very well. The Lt. Governor is devoted to improving the lives of women and has completely revamped campaign finance laws, mandating that every woman has to contribute to a public fund.

This administration has put more women in office, seen a growth in jobs, created "culture caring"

and concern about all citizens, with an emphasis on quality of life issues. The hallmark of this administration is the empowerment of women (this is made easier now that the legislature is 50% women). There are now priorities for families and children, and a campaign for "healthy families to make a healthy workforce." Every organization gives 15% of its profits back to the community and to non-profits.

The defense industry is converting to peace-time activities (the environment and education); corporate boards are now 80% female; women have broken the glass ceiling — over 50% of CEOs are women; job training is a requirement; women are fully employed; and backup support systems provide dependent care and enable work lives and family lives to be in balance. Women have access to career ladders, are equally valued as technical and skilled employees, and the number of training programs for unskilled workers has increased. Schools are safe and are making money even with low tuition, and there is a push for education for all. The state now has an integrated information highway delivery system, one-stop shopping for employment opportunities, and a network of social agencies that include in-house dependent care. As a result of all of these services, the economy enjoys raised productivity, reduced absenteeism, and eliminated red tape.

## Future Scenario – 5

The state is preparing to inaugurate its third woman governor in succession. The inauguration is scheduled to coincide with Women's History Month in March. In the Governor's inaugural address, she refers to the facts that the manufacture and sale of handguns have been banned and that there is now compulsory dependent care, paid family leave, mandatory worker sabbaticals, local quality education, affordable universal health care, and flex time through telecommuting.

Local education centers serve both teens and parents, a practice that has decreased the number of dropouts and increased the number of young men and young women studying science and math. A better educated population has resulted in a decreased dependence on the welfare system and an increase in the number of people living above the poverty level.

A shortened political campaign season has been instituted by capping the amount spent on political campaigns, and the majority in both the Senate and the House are now women. The new Cabinet consists of the Secretary of the Non-traditional, the Old Crony Burial Officer, the Secretary of Gender Equity, the Director of Assurance of Economic Independence for All, the Secretary of Competitive but Compassionate Business, and the Secretary of Cradle-to-Grave Education.

## Future Scenario – 6

Date: March 14, 2004. Event: A "Today Show" documentary segment. Despite the fact that it is snowing, there is no sense of crisis. A national model program has been set up in Massachusetts to provide job flexibility and dependent care on a flexible basis thus allowing choices about working at home or using flex time during such emergencies as a snow day. Universal health care and job creation are now available for every worker in the country. The segment depicts the ways in which three typical families are dealing with today's working realities. The first involves a mother who is telecommuting but still longs for dependent care. The second involves a mother returning to work after two years of maternity leave, who is pleased to have on-site dependent care that can also absorb extra children when there's a temporary need, like this snow day. The third scenario involves a parent who, because of flex time, has stayed home today with a sick child and will work on Saturday.

## Themes for an Economic Agenda for Women in Massachusetts

After we presented the future scenarios, a volunteer group met to compile a list of the themes common to the various group presentations. The group identified the next steps for including women more fully in the economy. Because the scenarios each contained many similarities, a list of our common areas of concern quickly emerged.

1. The Workplace
2. Education and Training
3. Employment Opportunities
4. Political Activity/Influence
5. Public and Personal Safety
6. Health

When we reconvened to create our agenda on our last day, we met in stakeholder groups and reviewed the list.

Based on the stakeholder groups' discussions, the full group of conference participants selected the four areas on which they would focus as they created the economic agenda. Those areas are:

1. Education and Training
2. Employment Opportunities
3. Workplace Environment
4. Political Influence

## Stakeholder Action Steps

Our final task was to make commitments to work for change in these four areas, both as stakeholders and decision makers. From these commitments would come the momentum and the activities necessary to create an economic development agenda for women in Massachusetts. Meeting for the final time with our stakeholder groups (each group, by conference consensus, sent a representative to form a new "Collaborative Group"), we asked ourselves what we could contribute to making this agenda a reality. Each group made two sets of commitments: one to initial short-term steps and one to long-term implementation steps.

### Advocates

**Short-term Action Steps:**

- Develop information on how to access and use existing public funds, specifically employment and training funds targeted for women.
- Develop a task force to research the problems so as to better understand who the players are and how to talk to the decision makers.
- Research availability of existing money, distinguishing between federal and state funds, and then develop recommendations for increased access to and distribution of these funds.

**Long-term Action Steps:**

- Enhance existing initiatives that focus on women in leadership, government, and health care.
- Establish a mentoring group for women in leadership positions and for those looking to become leaders.
- Create a task force that will be the repository of information regarding public funds for women and how they can be leveraged, and guidelines for access to those funds.
- Leverage funds by promoting collaboration between government agencies and other organizations.

### Bay State Skills Corporation

*[The facilitators from BSSC asked for and received permission from the conference participants to contribute a set of action steps to this part of the future search process.]*

**Short-term Action Steps:**

- Prepare and distribute a media advisory about the conference.
- Create and produce the conference report.
- Co-host a State House reception to release the conference report in May.
- Reconvene all the conference participants just before the reception to review where we all are in addressing our short-term goals.
- Create a Stakeholders' Steering Committee to move the economic agenda forward.

### Long-term Action Steps:

- Produce a quarterly broadsheet for the Center for Women, Work, and Family.
- Reconvene the conference group again in six months for a presentation to Secretary of Economic Affairs Gloria Larson and her colleagues regarding her agency's role in the economic agenda for women.
- Create an ongoing education campaign to keep the media informed and to have the media keep women in the economy in the forefront of the issues that they present to the public.

## Business and Industry

### Short-term Action Steps:

- Interface between business and the community to research local community opportunities to combine business and education, and to determine what the local schools need from businesses.
- Develop relationships with appropriate sources at local schools.
- Adopt a class; adopt a school; develop work ethics curricula for the middle school level and have mentoring and career fairs at high school level.
- Access Employee Assistance Programs of small- and medium-size companies.

### Long-term Action Steps:

- Formalize statewide programs using federal and state funds.
- Develop a statewide network of these local business and local school programs.
- Restructure the work environment; begin by having companies do internal audits of the policies that they offer their workers with regard to flex time, job sharing, and various other kinds of benefits.
- Encourage companies to research other companies, talk to other companies, and find out what sort of workforce benefit practices are in place at those companies.
- Support change and assist companies with a course of action.
- Convene a follow-up conference for decision makers and CEOs, where companies and advocacy groups will be able to present their own ideas and experiences with making changes.

## Collaborative Group

### Short-term Action Steps:

- Assemble a task force to define and present a Massachusetts Recognition Award to honor innovative companies for their workforce and workplace programs. The task force would be made up of people from the public and private sector, legislators, and advocates to help choose the companies.
- Create a national task force comprised of stakeholder representatives who would identify national workplace models for potential state legislation and programs.

### Long-term Action Steps:

- Make the Massachusetts Recognition Award an annual award for socially responsible companies who have taken action.
- Have the national stakeholder task force make their recommendations for legislation by December 1996.

## Community of Women

*[In keeping with the work and vision that they created together, the group initially called "Working Women" symbolically changed the name to "Community of Women."]*

### Short-term Action Steps:

- Change image from "Working Women" to "Community of Women," with a shift in the focus toward increasing our influence in the political, workplace, and community arenas.
- Shift from grass roots, loosely organized, passive efforts at getting our message out to eliciting the help of colleagues to present our case in an assertive way.
- Start an ongoing discussion group to enroll more people in our current agenda. Keep bringing in new people to empower them.
- Acknowledge the accomplishments of not only ourselves but also other women, with special recognitions and awards.

### Long-term Action Steps:

- Get out the vote among disenfranchised populations.
- Encourage individuals to act effectively, i.e. in groups, on campaigns, in unions, and so forth.
- Establish groups — formal and authorized or informal and unauthorized — in the workplace dur-

ing the lunch hour to discuss issues.
- Find a mentor for yourself; become a mentor for another woman.

## Educators

### Short-term Action Steps:

- Convene small subgroups from the conference to work on school-to-life preparedness, including training and further education issues.
- Model and promote elements of our economic agenda in our daily interactions with others.
- Form a "pest" support group to reinforce one another's persistence in pushing our agenda items.
- Stress the extraordinary needs of poor and minority women by asking educational organizations to review their curricula and programs to see how they address those specific needs.

### Long-term Action Steps:

- Promote understanding of the Education Reform Law of 1993.
- Develop a positive campaign about education.
- Request that school councils prioritize a positive public awareness campaign about education's successes and strengths through their work, and ask that higher education board meeting councils put this awareness campaign on their agenda.
- Transform the culture of the classroom to reflect a humanistic, gender-neutral approach by increasing self-motivation of students and decreasing top-down control; examine and implement total quality participatory management.

## Government Agencies

### Short-term Action Steps:

- Convene cross-agency meetings on women's issues specific to some of the projects each agency oversees; these meetings will take place on an ongoing basis, some collectively and some individually.
- Host inclusive and informal meetings through BSSC and the Industrial Services Program; representatives to the meetings will be from the government/agency stakeholder group and the private sector.
- Focus on women and technical education; guide girls and women into technical education and then into the workforce; also include workforce upgrading.
- Sensitize staff to issues about women and technical education and get involved in the general planning process for women in technical education.
- Support the MassJobs Council Women and Science and Technology Task Force.

### Long-term Action Steps:

- Retrain dislocated workers and sensitize the counselors who work with this population; offer them opportunities for technical training.
- Design workforce training so that employers remain aware of women and the career paths for women in technical fields.
- Provide technical assistance to the Service Delivery Areas, and capacity building for their staff as part of ongoing staff development.
- Develop interagency staff training to integrate all existing staff development and literacy programs.
- Explore joint projects with the Massachusetts Manufacturing Partnership for women in or entering the workforce.

## Legislators

### Short-term Action Steps:

- Release the report at a State House event.
- Attract media attention and focus on what we have done at the conference.
- Continue to work on the sexual harassment bill.
- Investigate the use of training dollars and how they are being spent or misdirected.

### Long-term Action Steps:

- Begin work on the state's nontraditional jobs bill.
- Help get more women involved, particularly poor women, in the political process.
- Establish a fund where women who are poor or of average income could contribute a small amount; get lots and lots of contributions; and create a private fund that would then be used to enable poorer women to run for office.

From our exploration of the past, present, and future — and from our commitments to action — came the economic agenda and the action steps to achieve that agenda. We recommend both to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; they follow in Section IV.

# IV: Economic Agenda and Recommended Action Steps

To summarize the learning from the *Women and the Economy: The Next Ten Years — Creating an Agenda for Massachusetts* conference and capture the intensity and energy of three days work is not easy. Coupled with the complexity of political, economic, and social changes that have taken place in America over the past three decades, our task was great.

The goals of the conference were to develop a common view of the future for the economy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and to create an agenda for women in that economy. To achieve these goals, we analyzed the past and present and envisioned what we would want a future to look like for women in the economy.

In the sixties, we believed that the federal government should fix everything. In the seventies, we decided that that concept did not work, and we shifted away from state and federal government to local government and community-based programs as the solution. And in the eighties, we abandoned the public sector entirely and shifted the full responsibility onto the private sector. After our analysis, we at the conference decided that the next decade needs to strike a balance among all of these. We need to take a step back from shifting responsibility and blame and move a step closer to cooperative solutions. And "solutions" it must be because there can be no single solution to the myriad of obstacles that keep women from full employment and from being viewed as vital contributors to the economy.

Defining a common vision for the economic future of women in Massachusetts, therefore, requires a dramatic step forward, a 180-degree shift in perspective whereby "women's issues" become mainstream issues for which we all take responsibility. Issues such as dependent care, flex time, pay equity, glass ceilings, education and training, violence, and poverty are matters of concern that impact our economy. The debate over these issues should not be about gender but rather about collective solutions that will increase the viability of our economy and the quality of life that that economy is intended to support.

As we created our agenda for the future, we first challenged ourselves to define actions steps that will have a positive impact on the worker and the family. From our discussions and our experience together, we became convinced that we can best meet this challenge by networking our collective resources and implementing our action steps collaboratively.

Our second and final challenge is to support both the worker and the family by developing models that transform "crisis service" into continuous support for the family, such as flexible and family-friendly workplaces, quality and affordable dependent care, pay equity, family care leave, and access to education and training opportunities for the new workplace.

## A Ten-year Economic Agenda for Women in Massachusetts

To create a healthy economy that exists to support the families of the Commonwealth, we propose the following agenda. Together, we will:

1. Transform the political process and policymaking processes to acknowledge and respond to the diversity of voices in the Commonwealth.
2. Transform and adapt the structure and environment of the workplace to respond to the changing characteristics of the diverse workforce of the Commonwealth.
3. Transform the access route to employment so that all in the Commonwealth who want paid employment can work with dignity at a living wage.
4. Transform the Commonwealth's education and training systems to create a bridge between the needs of the workforce and the needs of the workplace and customize the response to the needs of women in the workplace.
5. Transform the economy of the Commonwealth from one that exists to support business to one that exists to support people and from one that ignores "women's" issues to one that works to solve them because they are "family" issues.

## Recommended Action Steps

In addition to each of our stakeholder groups committing to taking a number of short-term and long-term action steps toward achieving the agenda, we invite all to join us in taking the following recommended actions.

### Generally:

- Support development of national economic development models for women.
- Keep issues relating to the effects of societal changes on women and families at the forefront of the media's attention.
- Support an increase in funding for education and training and of programs and services that support women as economic contributors.
- Work toward a healthy, safe, and violence-free society.
- Advocate adequate child support by absentee parents.
- Support adequate and affordable housing.
- Ensure that minimum wage corresponds to 150% of poverty level.

### In the political arena:

- Support legislation that promotes women in the economy.
- Support the movement of women into positions of leadership.
- Ensure the equitable distribution of public funds.
- Encourage the political sophistication of women from every socio-economic strata and support efforts to register women voters.
- Support candidates who share our vision of an economy based on human rather than corporate structures.

### In the workplace:

- Encourage a flexible workplace environment that recognizes the importance of the family and encourages diversity in the workforce.
- Work towards a gender-neutral work environment.
- Support the movement of women into upper management, middle management, board positions, and union leadership.

- Encourage quality Employee Assistance Programs that support all workers and their family issues.
- Support skills upgrading and retraining programs for workers.
- Increase employee participation in decision making, job planning, and career development.
- Transform work processes to ensure that all are meaningful and satisfying activities.

### In creating work opportunities:

- Establish and support women's professional development.
- Promote occupational mobility of women workers in lower and middle levels of employment and promote access to jobs with higher skill levels and responsibilities.
- Enhance dislocated worker services to address particular needs of women and treat all workers as important contributors to the economy.
- Promote the development of non-traditional and technical career paths through training and apprenticeship programs.
- Support programs that encourage the entrepreneurial efforts of women and assist them in small business enterprises.
- Ensure that everyone who wants to work has an opportunity to do so.
- Acknowledge that child care is necessary and that child care workers should be paid a living wage.
- Support gender-equity training for teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators.

### In education and training:

- Create a directory of funding and support resources.
- Support statewide and local collaboration among businesses, communities, and schools that enhance school-to-work opportunities and develop and promote models for young women.
- Ensure the promotion of economic and employment opportunities for women through training and education programs.
- Encourage industry collaboration with training and education in the design and implementation of programs in order to better prepare women for both non-traditional and traditional career paths.
- Enhance literacy and computational skill training as a foundation for understanding and working within our increasingly complex technological society.
- Develop retraining programs for women targeted to growth sectors.

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Our economy, our family structures, and the face of our workforce are all changing. We must seize the momentum and shape this cultural transformation so that the economy of Massachusetts functions to support the well being of all our citizens. We must focus our agenda and our commitments on the changing roles and the increasing contributions of women in the Massachusetts economy and on how their contributions can be made more effective. We invite all who share our vision to invest with us in this effort and, wherever possible, exercise their influence to meet this agenda. By working collaboratively, we will achieve our goal: a healthy economy that supports and includes the well-being of the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

# APPENDIX A

## CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

| | |
|---|---|
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| Cynthia Davis | Jewish Vocational Services, Member of Bay State Skills Corporation's Center for Women, Work, and Family Advisory Council |
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| Sue Paxman | Manager, Communications and Editorial Services, Bay State Skills Corporation |
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# APPENDIX B

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BSSC

# APPENDIX D

## ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS: SECRETARY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS GLORIA CORDES LARSON FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

To start, I would like to give you a little bit of a personal anecdote about my joining the Weld Administration. I really didn't just drop into it in August of 1993; previously, I was Secretary of Consumer Affairs and was one of the first cabinet officers appointed in January of 1991 when Governor Weld came into office. I spent my first two and one-half years regulating such largely male-dominated industries as insurance, banking, public utilities, alcohol beverage control, and racing. Before I joined the Weld Cabinet, I had spent most of my professional career at the Federal Trade Commission in Washington, D.C. A lawyer by training, I have also been in private practice.

Because I have spent so much time in Washington, particularly during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, I am very well aware of how difficult it is for women at all levels in the business community and the political sphere.

I am personally delighted to see that our friends from the legislature are a part of this conference. They can certainly give you their own long list of personal anecdotes about the difficulties that women face. One of my personal heroes is Nancy Kassebaum. Frankly, all seven of the women senators now in the U.S. Senate are heroes of mine, regardless of their political affiliation, but I have admired Nancy Kassebaum since she was one of the lone voices for women in the U.S. Senate. I think she summed it up best when she said, "We still really do have problems in the U.S. Senate; just ask Barbara Mikulski. It really is an 'old boys' club. The biggest problem is not that women aren't increasingly being included but that when women are brought to the table — at whatever level, including being a U.S. Senator — men are still indifferent to the contributions that women can make."

I think that it's incredibly important that you have gathered as a group from various walks of life and from the private and public sectors to suggest an agenda that's forward-looking, a set of real action steps. When I was introduced to you as a spokesperson for this conference, I really didn't feel like your spokesperson at all. I think you all collectively are the spokesperson for this effort. I *very* much look forward to having you give me a blueprint for going forward because it's very easy, when you sit where I do on Beacon Hill, to get immersed in the urgencies of each day and not spend enough time looking at an agenda of what can realistically be done for the next decade.

One of the issues that I want to talk about today is the list of priorities that I have for the things that haven't yet been done, the kinds of things that I was looking at on the long lists on the walls that you have put together over the last couple of days.

Before I do, however, let me offer a quick anecdote that suggests the sort of collective indifference that women continually deal with: men generally don't even know why we are where we are.

When the governor had just announced that I was to be appointed to Consumer Affairs back in January of 1991 a couple weeks before his inaugural address, he called me in Washington and asked, "Gloria, could you fly in for my inaugural address?" I said, "Of course, I can; it would be an honor." So, I flew in that day, and was a bit late getting in from the airport.

As I rushed into the State House, an aide to the Governor grabbed me, and he said, "I gotta get you into the House chamber because the Governor's about to give his inaugural address; he's gonna start any minute, and you're going to be late. You have to be in there." I thought, "This is great; somebody's going to get me through the crowds, and I can get into a front row seat." When we got

down to the front row, I noticed that there were seats reserved with a cabinet member's name on each one of them. At that point, my guide turned to me and said, "No, you're supposed to stand right next to the podium."

I quickly said, "Gosh, I think maybe a mistake's been made here."

"No, no mistake's been made; you're the lady that we hired to do the sign language interpretation for the Governor's address." Not realizing the mistake that he had made, he singled me out simply because I was a woman with dark hair who seemed to be in a hurry to get into the House chamber. I must have been the woman that he was looking for, the woman for whom he had a specific purpose. The story's interesting because not only is it kind of a funny story, but it also resonates about how indistinguishable women still are from other women in many parts of the business community, whether in the public or the private sector.

Let me just spend a couple of minutes telling you about a few things that we're doing by way of bolstering the economy generically because, of course, as good things happen to the economy in Massachusetts — with the help of the Governor and the legislature and with the private and public sectors working together — everybody benefits, certainly women included.

I don't need to tell anyone in the room today about the horrible times that we have been through in Massachusetts: 300,000 to 400,000 jobs lost over a five- to six-year period; and the ongoing announcements of big corporate layoffs, particularly in the defense industry, still in minicomputers, and some in the financial sector. We're going to continue to read about those big layoffs, and as we do, we must remember that they typically have a disproportionate negative effect on women — last in, first to go.

But at the same time, as you all know and have probably been discussing, the economy is growing in Massachusetts. And where are the new jobs — 70,000 over the last year — coming from? It is the small businesses and the high tech companies in Massachusetts that are adding jobs, particularly the small start-up enterprises.

I hope that you all saw the *Boston Herald* story yesterday that focused on the fact that *Working Women* magazine has determined that Boston is one of the best places for women to build small businesses, both in terms of the sheer numbers that have done so and the success stories that they're demonstrating by way of their revenue growth: over a 560% growth in revenue over a five-year period. So, there is good news on the economic front.

In addition, we have used a set of broad brush strokes to bolster the economy by trying to figure out where the problems are and then addressing those problems head on. We went to the general business community and to the local and state authorities and ask ed, "What's impeding business growth in Massachusetts?" In response, they gave us a list of things that is now embodied in a blueprint for economic recovery called "Choosing to Compete." Certainly the biggest problem identified by the business sector is access to capital. With the help of the legislature, we have set up three loan programs; one is a small-business capital-access program set up specifically to help small and medium-sized businesses that are either going to have to go into a layoff mode or that have the potential to expand if they can get a loan but don't have the kind of track record that the banks are looking for. We now have the state lined up as a guarantor for these loans, and the program has been an enormously resounding success. In six months, sixty-eight banks have signed 140 of these loans statewide for a total of $7 million. These are old-fashioned, handshake loans that were not being given until the Commonwealth stepped up to the line as a guarantor.

We have also created an export fund. Increasingly, women — particularly small business owners — are recognizing that global markets are absolutely the way to go; they're taking our training courses in exporting and, then again, getting loans that are now available with the state as a guarantor through an export fund.

We also have an emerging technology fund to support efforts such as biotechnology companies during pilot production, a time when they may find difficulty obtaining loans because they do not have products to take to market but which is critical to their development as viable companies. The fact that a disproportionate number of women are breaking the glass ceiling and moving up through middle management ranks in high technology companies in Massachusetts, particularly in the biotechnology field, determined for us that this was another area that we needed to shore up.

From our survey, we also knew that taxes were too high in Massachusetts, presenting difficulties for our corporate community. If companies were going to stay here, build factories, grow, and expand, they had to have relief. The investment tax credit is now three percent; that's a triple increase from what it was before. What I want to emphasize here, however, is that we're focusing in particular on distressed areas of the state. We have a program in my office that will, in the next six months, focus on twenty areas that need particular local and state tax relief in order to get businesses to move in. Many of them are urban core areas, but many rural areas have also been hard hit by the recession. This program is going to help a lot; the state tax incentive for doing business in one of those communities will be five percent. If you take over an abandoned building, it goes up to ten percent.

So we're putting into place a number of tax and loan programs that will help entrepreneurs get off the ground at exactly the same time that the economy is starting to turn around incrementally. We are also moving fast to streamline the whole permitting process in Massachusetts. Currently, even if you're only trying to redo a small storefront, you need local permits, you need state permits. It can take a couple years to get both, and you don't have a couple years to wait. Without reducing any of the environmental standards, the new process will enable you to get your permits and get your expanded location up and running much more quickly, even if you're only redoing an office.

In addition, we are increasing our marketing of Massachusetts as a good bi-partisan place to do business, a place with a very supportive state legislature in addition to a very supportive Governor's office. We believe that now is a good time to move your company here. But that's not all. If you are a company who has stuck with us through the recession, you are our first customers because we don't want to see the layoffs continue. We know we will still see them in the defense industry and a couple of other big corporate areas where the downsizing is inevitable, but we want to make certain that the many small companies growing in Massachusetts that could choose to go lots of other places know that it is now to their best advantage to stay here.

Now, let's turn to what the Weld administration is trying to do for women specifically and then let me tell you what we haven't yet done, but we should do, for women specifically. One thing that Governor Weld told me early on was that he wanted a broad-based state effort that would be an example for the private sector.

From the beginning, Governor Weld's view has been that state government should serve as the example. If we put things in order in our own place — by offering merit pay for managers, providing career training for women and others, helping them move up through the ranks of state government, dealing with the sick and family leave issues that have hamstrung women who are trying to deal with career and family issues at the same time, providing on-site daycare, and handling problems such as workplace security — then we are in a better position to strong-arm, or soft-arm, the business community into doing the right thing by way of its employees. We are putting our money and our mouths where some of our ideas are.

Some of these state programs have already gone into effect. We've been focusing initially on alternative work options, flexibility for women in the state government workplace, family illness flex days that you can make up later. Some of our efforts that we would like to implement now are having to be carried on a pilot basis because of a union situation in state government.

One of those is the school volunteer effort. Women, some men but women predominantly, are volunteering one day per month at a school through the Secretary of Education's office. Although it is now just a pilot program, we intend to duplicate it throughout state government.

We have filed legislation, which we will be refiling shortly, to ensure much better long-term leave benefits, better insurance benefits for women who want to take longer maternity leave, and a disability insurance benefit that could be used for those purposes. We want to go much further in supporting women in the workplace than the current unpaid federal leave does, and we think that with the help of the legislature we can do just that.

We are also focusing on a whole range of other issues relating to women in the workplace — from safety to harassment. For two years, a task force has been working on a set of recommendations. Governor Weld, as you may know, also has a Women's Advisory Council that has come up with a comparable set of recommendations.

But that's not the only way to go. As I'm sure that you are discovering as you put your collective brains together, the real way to go is to ask women employees directly, "What do you need?" About a month ago, the Governor sent out a letter to all state employees indicating that we were going to do a survey. On March 23, the survey will be issued to all state employees, asking them what their priorities are; what needs to be done, category by category; and what we should be doing in state government. We can then use the results of this survey to form a set of recommendations to be turned into action steps, just as you'll be turning your recommendations into action steps for me.

I'm not going to go into a lot of detail about the other issues on which the Governor has focused — like choice legislation, domestic violence, the commutation of sentences for battered women — except to say that this Governor and Lt. Governor are very well aware that all of them are part of the package. Women *have to deal* with day care and safety issues, with the home front issues, with school issues for children — the whole range of issues — if we are going to be successful in the workplace. And these issues cannot be segregated into separate categories; they have to be dealt with as part of a package.

The State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance (SOMWBA) is part of my office; SOMWBA is the agency that certifies women and minorities in business for state contracts. We are about to announce a brand new set of regulations. This area has been a bit controversial because some minority business firms were slammed in a *Boston Herald* series a couple months ago. It's true that there's been fairly lax enforcement over the years about who was actually doing business and whether there was a front person.

We think that the focus on this area has been misplaced; we think that it's been so hard to get accredited by SOMWBA that a lot of women- and minority-owned businesses have just gone on their way and left the whole idea of state contracting on the table. As a result, many state contracts are not getting the kinds of bids from these firms that they should.

So, we have come up with a much accelerated, much easier process; you can now get certified in a very short amount of time. It is no longer an arduous, expensive process for which you need to hire lawyers just to get accredited as a women-in-business operation in Massachusetts. This new approach will be announced in the next thirty days. Again, we think that putting the focus on streamlining accreditation up front — and then really slamming the bad guys, when we find them, with civil and criminal penalties — is a much better way to go than coming up with some real elaborate enforcement scheme and still keeping it almost impossible for businesses to get certified in Massachusetts.

I also want to mention our new telecommuting project because I think it holds the possibility of really great results for a diversity of people in the workplace in Massachusetts: handicapped people, people of color, and most certainly women who are raising their kids at home. We have created a

two-part, year-long program that is going to give us the information and the experience to go directly to the private sector and say, "It works; follow our lead."

Not every single workplace in the state will be able to institute telecommuting; however, the studies that have been done in other states where this has been tried show that productivity levels rise when you allow people to do what they do best in a setting that accommodates the other issues in their lives.

The first part of our two-part program is the at-home project where we are currently training 350 employees from about 100 different companies. We will soon be adding about 100 state employees and 50 disabled persons who have already been selected for the project as well. So, approximately 500 people in this statewide pilot project will be given some direct assistance to work off-site for part of the work week. They will have fax machines, printers, the right kinds of computers — in short, everything they need, in addition to the training to operate that kind of machinery in their homes — to prove to their employers that they can do their jobs much better than they were doing before when they were commuting long distances, juggling child care responsibilities, paying for child care, and very often having to leave the workforce and their careers for reasons outside of their control and choice.

The second part is going to be to set up telecommuting business centers around the state, outside of urban areas, so that small business entrepreneurs can get together to share equipment and resources, again with some state assistance, to prove that you can be effective at doing business without commuting into Boston or leaving your home and travelling a great distance. This kind of situation is the one that now typically forces women and others out of the workplace at precisely the time when they may be at the most productive stage of their lives. We think that telecommuting is going to prove to be incredibly effective and supportive of business.

I have not even touched on some of telecommuting's advantages to the environment, but from my perspective, the economic benefit and the flexibility that this innovative program provides for a broad spectrum of people, who have previously been shut out of the workforce, are the major advantages. I think that telecommuting is going to prove to benefit women disproportionately, with disabled people being in the next highest category. By adding telecommuters to their workforce, employers will discover that some of their most valuable employees are people who right now are being shut out because of other life issues and who need this kind of flexibility.

Let me also just mention some of the things that I think we're not doing such a good job on. When I first walked in today and was met by my compatriots from Bay State Skills, I told them that when I had looked into the job training programs in Massachusetts that specifically benefit women as part of my preparation for this speech, I couldn't come up with any. They said, "Well Gloria, there's a reason for that; it's because they don't exist."

A couple of weeks ago, I delivered a commencement address to the graduates of the Middlesex Community College biotechnology program. These students would previously have needed their GEDs to get training. Many of them had dropped out of high school — again, a disproportionate number of women were in the group. Now, through funding — coincidentally by Bay State Skills Corporation with help from the private sector through the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council — this group of people, who were previously underemployed or unemployed with no prospects of employment, have completed a high tech training program in Massachusetts. Every single one of those graduates, as well as every single one of the graduates of the two preceding classes, have jobs in biotech companies in Massachusetts.

When you bring focused training directly to the workplace, training that matches employer needs directly with employee needs, what a miracle, it works! It makes all the sense in the world to focus all those federal dollars — $700 million collectively between the state and federal governments — much

more directly on the specific training needs of the employees and the very jobs that employers are currently hiring for. I can't wait to see your blueprint for women in the economy because as a state we have done a miserable job of focusing on women, particularly women at the entry level, women who lack the educational background and skills, women living in urban areas, and women of color. There's a whole range of women whom, I will admit to you quite candidly, we haven't paid enough attention to.

I'm absolutely thrilled that (and one of the reasons that I thought convening this conference was such a good idea) you will give me the collective benefit of your ideas on the best way to go forward to work on behalf of women in our economy. I know there are a whole range of issues to which you are addressing yourselves, and I very much look forward to getting your report of all of these issues. I will not allow that report to gather dust on a back shelf in my office. In fact, I've already learned that because I volunteered so well at my first Bay State Skills Corporation board meeting that I've already been volunteered, along with our legislative friends, to present the report and its legislative recommendations to the legislature.

I want to be helpful on more than that front. I want to be directly helpful to you in implementing those recommendations and action steps that we can through this Administration. If we can find ways to shift funds — and surely we can — we ought to bring a direct focus on implementing an economic agenda for women in Massachusetts. This effort is long overdue.